



 apartment therapy

The Complete Guide to Decluttering

A step-by-step guide to decluttering room by room.



Decluttering is a massive undertaking and ...
can be a deeply emotional process when it comes down to deciding what stays or goes in your home. And when you don't know how or where to start, it can feel pretty daunting. The secret is to take it one step (and room) at a time. We're here to help make decluttering your home feel doable so that you can kick clutter to the curb — for good!

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Prepare Yourself Before Decluttering

Getting started is often the hardest part of decluttering. That's why you should prepare before diving right in. Here's where we recommend you start.

- **Picture the end result.** Getting into the right headspace is important. Begin by envisioning the result you want to achieve.
- **Find your motivation.** Whether it's putting on some music, having a reward at the end, or working in complete silence — find what motivates you to keep going.
- **Make a schedule.** Have a plan to put into action for how you want to declutter. Whether it's working one day a week, committing an hour a day, or completing the two-week Decluttering Cure, creating a schedule will help you break your project down into manageable tasks that are less overwhelming to complete.
- **Set a deadline.** Put down a realistic date you want to complete your decluttering projects by. These can be flexible and separated based on projects.

HOW TO DECLUTTER YOUR ENTIRE HOME, ROOM BY ROOM

Our comprehensive guide takes you room by room (starting with the kitchen and ending with the living room!) and follows a simple strategy: Empty, categorize, and place. You'll work one section at a time to empty, categorize (what you'll keep or release), and place items you're keeping back where they belong — and get rid of anything you're not.

Kitchen

The kitchen is the heart of the home and where you might spend a lot of time cooking, eating, and gathering. That's why it should be the first spot you tackle.

- **Start with a small section.** Pick one micro-area, such as a drawer, cabinet, or shelf, to start.
- **Clear out items that don't belong.** Grab a laundry basket or box and quickly gather things that need to get put away somewhere else. Set this aside for now.
- **Begin with the refrigerator.** Go through shelves and remove any visibly bad, expired items.
- **Use the empty, categorize, and place strategy.** Use this three-step decluttering process: Empty the contents, organize everything into categories, and decide what you'll keep, toss, or donate. Clean the area and then place items you're keeping back where they belong.
- **Bonus: Evaluate your purchases.** Take this time to evaluate your purchases to see what you're using and what you're not so you make better shopping decisions moving forward.
- **Continue the empty, categorize, and place strategy for the rest of the kitchen.** Here are some other areas you can declutter: cabinets, drawers, pantry, and your under-sink area.

KITCHEN ORGANIZERS

WE LOVE:



Copco Non-Skid Pantry Cabinet Lazy Susan

Turntables make it easier to access hard-to-reach items. Put them in cabinets to wrangle bottles, spices, and more pantry staples, or even inside the fridge for condiments and other refrigerated items.



Get your under-sink area in order with this **SmartHom Under Sink Organizer**. It's minimalistic, rust-resistant, and an overall smart storage find.

Bathroom

When it comes to decluttering the bathroom, you want the end result to be a fully optimized space for your morning and nighttime routines. Here's how to do it.

- **Take everything out of cabinets and drawers.** Empty everything, including items on your countertop.
- **Decide what you'll keep and toss.** It's time to toss any expired, unsafe, or no-longer-needed items.
- **Create categories.** Group items into categories and narrow down what you need and don't need. Make sure you're relocating anything that doesn't belong in the bathroom.
- **Create a system.** Before placing things back, consider reorganizing based on your current routine to save time, reduce stress, and make things easy to grab and go.
- **Designate zones and replace your items.** Additionally, designate zones for each category and put items where they belong.



BATHROOM ORGANIZER

WE LOVE:

Umbra Bellwood Over the Toilet Shelf

will help increase the storage in your bathroom. It offers a modern design and three shelves to use.

Closets

Closets are one of the most difficult spots to declutter because they can be used for so many things! The best approach is to take it one step at a time. Here's what we recommend.

- **Break down the project into categories.** This will make decluttering much more approachable. For instance, tackle your clothes first, then move on to accessories, shoes, etc. Or, you can empty the entire thing, categorize it, and go from there.
- **Decide what to keep.** Move through each item in the category and decide what to keep, toss, sell, and donate, and separate into piles. It can be helpful to consider what items make you feel good and suit your current lifestyle as you're going through pieces.
- **Put everything you're keeping back.** Create designated spaces for different types of items to keep your closet organized.



CLOSET ORGANIZERS WE LOVE:



These **Ziploc Flexible Totes** are flexible and adaptable; use them to store out-of-season items, accessories, and more.



The Home Edit Thin Clothing Hangers will instantly upgrade your closet. They're slim, sturdy, and high-quality hangers with anti-slip notches to hold shirts and sweaters, plus a bar to hang pants and skirts on.

Bedroom

Having an organized bedroom not only impacts the look of your space, but also the quality of your rest. It's time to declutter so you can decompress after a long day.



- **Take out items that don't belong.** Your bedroom might be littered with empty glasses or trash, so remove anything that doesn't belong here first.
- **Clear surfaces.** Next, clear your bedroom surfaces of anything that does belong there and quickly put it where it should go. For instance, put away any objects that belong in your nightstand drawers or fold and hang clothes that might be on the ground or thrown on a chair.
- **Work in small areas.** Choose just one drawer, dresser, or nightstand to work on at a time.
- **Empty.** Once you've decided on an area to tackle, empty the whole space out and decide, item by item, what you'll keep, donate, and toss.
- **Categorize.** After you've thinned out your belongings, categorize everything by type and place it back where it belongs.

BEDROOM ORGANIZERS WE LOVE:



The Container Store 4" Dream Drawer Organizers are incredibly compact finds that'll organize your drawers in a flash.



For under-bed storage, try these **Open Spaces Underbed Storage containers**. They're made of natural canvas material, are breathable, and feature zippers that surround the entire bin.

Living Room

The living room is the final room to tackle, and often the trickiest with the variety of things housed here. By starting small and utilizing the “empty, categorize, and place” method you’ll declutter in no time.



- **Choose a micro-area.** Start small, like one shelf or cabinet at a time, to avoid burnout.
- **Create a blank space.** Once you’ve picked which area to tackle, empty it.
- **Decide what to keep.** Make sure you prepare space or containers for each category before you begin. Go item by item and decide what stays and goes.
- **Categorize and place.** Then, categorize and strategically place items so that your space remains orderly. For instance, keep the remotes near the couch to make them easy to reach for.

LIVING ROOM ORGANIZER

WE LOVE:

The **Serena & Lily La Jolla Basket** is a beautiful and functional basket with an impressive storage capacity that you’ll want to display all over your home.

